

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

CASE:

DENISE PAYNE,

Plaintiff,

v.

WATERWAY SHOPPES II, LLLP, and
PIZZA FUSION, INC. d/b/a PIZZA
FUSION.,

Defendants.

COMPLAINT

Plaintiff, DENISE PAYNE, individually and on behalf of all other similarly situated mobility-impaired individuals (hereinafter "Plaintiff"), sues WATERWAY SHOPPES II, LLLP, and PIZZA FUSION, INC. d/b/a PIZZA FUSION., (hereinafter "Defendants"), and as grounds alleges:

JURISDICTION, PARTIES, and VENUE

1. This is an action for injunctive relief, a declaration of rights, attorneys' fees, litigation expenses, and costs pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12181, *et seq.*, (the "Americans with Disabilities Act" or "ADA") and 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201 and 2202.

2. The Court has original jurisdiction over Plaintiff's claims arising under 42 U.S.C. § 12181, *et seq.* pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1343 and 42 U.S.C. § 12117(a).

3. The Court has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201 and 2202, and may render declaratory judgment on the existence or nonexistence of any right under 42 U.S.C. § 12181, *et seq.*

4. Plaintiff, DENISE PAYNE, is an individual over eighteen years of age, residing in

Florida, and is otherwise *sui juris*.

5. At all times material, Defendant, WATERWAY SHOPPES II, LLLP. owned and operated a commercial retail center located at 2310-2410 Weston Road (hereinafter the “Commercial Property”) and conducted a substantial amount of business in that place of public accommodation in Broward County, Florida. Defendant, WATERWAY SHOPPES II, LLLP., holds itself out to the public as “Waterway Shoppes II”.

6. At all times material, Defendant, WATERWAY SHOPPES II, LLLP., was and is a Florida Limited Liability Partnership, organized under the laws of the State of Florida, with its principal place of business in Weston, Florida.

7. At all times material, Defendant, PIZZA FUSION, INC. d/b/a PIZZA FUSION, owned and operated a commercial restaurant at 2378 Weston Road, Weston, Florida 33326¹ (hereinafter the “Commercial Restaurant”) and conducted a substantial amount of business in that place of public accommodation in Broward County, Florida. Defendant, PIZZA FUSION, INC. d/b/a PIZZA FUSION, holds itself out to the public as “PIZZA FUSION”.

8. At all times material, Defendant, PIZZA FUSION, INC. d/b/a PIZZA FUSION, was and is a Florida Profit Corporation, organized under the laws of the State of Florida, with its principal place of business in Weston, Florida.

9. Venue is properly located in the Southern District of Florida because Defendants’ Commercial Property is located in Broward County, Florida, Defendants regularly conduct business within Broward County, Florida, and because a substantial part(s) of the events or

¹ This address is located within the commercial retail center and place of public accommodation owned and operated by landlord Defendant, WATERWAY SHOPPES II, LLLP. located at 2310-2410 Weston Road, Weston, Florida 33326.

omissions giving rise to these claims occurred in Broward County, Florida.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

10. Although over thirty (30) years have passed since the effective date of Title III of the ADA, Defendants have yet to make its facilities accessible to individuals with disabilities.

11. Congress provided commercial businesses one and a half years to implement the Act. The effective date was January 26, 1992. In spite of this abundant lead-time and the extensive publicity the ADA has received since 1990, Defendants continue to discriminate against people who are disabled in ways that block them from access and use of Defendants' businesses and properties.

12. The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in 28 CFR 36.201 and requires landlords and tenants to be liable for compliance.

13. Plaintiff, DENISE PAYNE, is an individual with disabilities as defined by and pursuant to the ADA. Plaintiff uses a wheelchair to ambulate. Plaintiff has very limited use of her hands and cannot operate any mechanisms which require tight grasping or twisting of the wrist. She is limited in her major life activities by such, including but not limited to walking, standing, grabbing, grasping and/or pinching.

14. Defendant, WATERWAY SHOPPES II, LLLP. owns, operates and oversees the Commercial Property, its general parking lot and parking spots.

15. The subject Commercial Property is open to the public and is located in Weston, Broward County, Florida.

16. The individual Plaintiff visits the Commercial Property and businesses located within the Commercial Property, regularly, to include visits to the Commercial Property and

businesses located within the Commercial Property on or about March 29, 2022 and encountered multiple violations of the ADA that directly affected her ability to use and enjoy the Commercial Property and businesses located therein. She often visits the Commercial Property and businesses located within the Commercial Property in order to avail herself of the goods and services offered there, and because it is approximately seventeen (17) miles from her residence, and is near other businesses and restaurants she frequents as a patron. She plans to return to the Commercial Property and the businesses located within the Commercial Property within two (2) months of the filing of this Complaint, specifically on or before August 1, 2022.

17. The Plaintiff found the Commercial Property, and the businesses located within the Commercial Property to be rife with ADA violations. The Plaintiff encountered architectural barriers at the Commercial Property, and businesses located within the Commercial Property and wishes to continue her patronage and use of each of the premises.

18. The Plaintiff has encountered architectural barriers that are in violation of the ADA at the subject Commercial Property, and businesses located within the Commercial Property. The barriers to access at the Commercial Property, and the businesses located within the Commercial Property have each denied or diminished Plaintiff's ability to visit the Commercial Property, and businesses located within the Commercial Property, and have endangered her safety in violation of the ADA. The barriers to access, which are set forth below, have likewise posed a risk of injury(ies), embarrassment, and discomfort to Plaintiff, DENISE PAYNE, and others similarly situated.

19. Defendants, WATERWAY SHOPPES II, LLLP. and PIZZA FUSION, INC. D/B/A PIZZA FUSION, own and/or operate a place of public accommodation as defined by the

ADA and the regulations implementing the ADA, 28 CFR 36.201 (a) and 36.104. Defendants, WATERWAY SHOPPES II, LLLP. and PIZZA FUSION, INC. D/B/A PIZZA FUSION, are responsible for complying with the obligations of the ADA. The place of public accommodation that Defendants, WATERWAY SHOPPES II, LLLP. and PIZZA FUSION, INC. D/B/A PIZZA FUSION, own and operate the Commercial Property Business located at 2310-2410 Weston Road, Weston, Florida 33326.

20. Plaintiff, DENISE PAYNE, has a realistic, credible, existing and continuing threat of discrimination from the Defendants' non-compliance with the ADA with respect to the described Commercial Property and the businesses located within the Commercial Property, including but not necessarily limited to the allegations in Counts I and II of this Complaint. Plaintiff has reasonable grounds to believe that she will continue to be subjected to discrimination at the Commercial Property, and businesses located within the Commercial Property, in violation of the ADA. Plaintiff desires to visit the Commercial Property and businesses located therein, not only to avail herself of the goods and services available at the Commercial Property, and businesses located within the Commercial Property, but to assure herself that the Commercial Property and businesses located within the Commercial Property are in compliance with the ADA, so that she and others similarly situated will have full and equal enjoyment of the Commercial Property, and businesses located within the Commercial Property without fear of discrimination.

21. Defendant, WATERWAY SHOPPES II, LLLP., as landlord and owner of the Commercial Property Business, is responsible for all ADA violations listed in Counts I and II, and is jointly and severally liable for the violations in Count II of the Complaint.

22. Defendants have discriminated against the individual Plaintiff by denying her

access to, and full and equal enjoyment of, the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations of the Commercial Property, and businesses located within the Commercial Property, as prohibited by 42 U.S.C. § 12182 et seq.

COUNT I – ADA VIOLATIONS
AS TO WATERWAY SHOPPES II, LLLP. and PIZZA FUSION, INC. D/B/A
PIZZA FUSION

23. The Plaintiff adopts and re-alleges the allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 22 above as though fully set forth herein.

24. Defendants, WATERWAY SHOPPES II, LLLP. and PIZZA FUSION, INC. D/B/A PIZZA FUSION, have discriminated, and continues to discriminate, against Plaintiff in violation of the ADA by failing, inter alia, to have accessible facilities by January 26, 1992 (or January 26, 1993, if a Defendants has 10 or fewer employees and gross receipts of \$500,000 or less). A list of the violations that Plaintiff encountered during her visit to the Commercial Property, include but are not limited to, the following:

A. Parking

- i. The Plaintiff had difficulty exiting the vehicle, as designated accessible parking spaces are located on an excessive slope. Violation: There are accessible parking spaces throughout the Commercial Property located on an excessive slope violating Section 4.6.3 of the ADAAG and Section 502.4 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- ii. The Plaintiff had difficulty exiting the vehicle, as designated accessible parking space access aisles throughout the Commercial Property are located on an excessive slope. Violation: There are accessible parking space access aisles located on an excessive slope violating Section 4.6.3 of the ADAAG and Section 502.4 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.

- iii. The required number of accessible parking spaces throughout the Commercial Property is not provided, violating Section 4.1.2(5a) and 4.6.1 of the ADAAG and Section 208.2.4 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.

B. Entrance Access and Path of Travel

- i. The Plaintiff had difficulty traversing the path of travel throughout the Commercial Property, as it is not continuous and accessible. Violation: There are inaccessible routes from the public sidewalk and transportation stop. These are violations of the requirements in Sections 4.3.2(1), 4.3.8, 4.5.1, and 4.5.2 of the ADAAG and Sections 206.2.1, 302.1, 303, and 402.2 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- ii. The Plaintiff had difficulty traversing the path of travel throughout the Commercial Property, as there are cross slopes in excess of 2%. Violation: The path of travel contains excessive cross slopes in violation of Section 4.3.7 of the ADAAG and Section 403.3 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- iii. The Plaintiff had difficulty using some of the curb ramps throughout the Commercial Property, as the slopes are excessive. Violation: There are curb ramps at the facility that contain excessive slopes, violating Section 4.7.2 of the ADAAG and Sections 405.2 and 406.1 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- iv. The Plaintiff had difficulty traversing the path of travel throughout the Commercial Property due to abrupt changes in level. Violation: There are changes in levels of greater than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, violating Sections 4.3.8 and 4.5.2 of the ADAAG and Section 303 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.

**COUNT II – ADA VIOLATIONS
AS TO PIZZA FUSION, INC. d/b/a PIZZA FUSION**

25. The Plaintiff adopts and re-alleges the allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 22 above as though fully set forth herein.

26. Defendant, PIZZA FUSION, INC. D/B/A PIZZA FUSION, has discriminated, and continues to discriminate, against Plaintiff in violation of the ADA by failing, inter alia, to have accessible facilities by January 26, 1992 (or January 26, 1993, if a Defendants has 10 or fewer employees and gross receipts of \$500,000 or less). A list of the violations that Plaintiff encountered during her visit to the Commercial Property, include but are not limited to, the following:

A. Access to Goods and Services

i. There is seating provided that does not comply with the standards prescribed in Section 4.32 of the ADAAG and Sections 226 & 902 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.

B. Public Restrooms

i. The Plaintiff had difficulty using the doorknob and the locking mechanism on the restroom door without assistance, as they require tight grasping. Violation: The restroom door has non-compliant hardware for disabled patrons, violating Sections 4.13.9 & 4.27.4 of the ADAAG and Sections 309.4 & 404.2.7 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.

ii. The Plaintiff was exposed to a cutting/burning hazard because the lavatory pipes are not wrapped. Violation: The lavatory pipes are not fully wrapped or insulated violating Section 4.19.4 of the ADAAG and Section 606.5 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.

- iii. The Plaintiff had difficulty using the toilet paper & paper towels due to the rolls not being located within a dispenser. Violation: Elements in the restroom are not readily accessible and usable by persons with disabilities, violating 28 CFR 36.211, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- iv. The Plaintiff could not use the soap bottle without assistance, as it requires a tight grasp to operate. Violation: The soap dispensers require a tight grasp to operate in violation of Section 4.27.4 of the ADAAG and Section 309.4 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- v. The Plaintiff could not use the lavatory without assistance, as it is mounted too high. Violation: There are lavatories in public restrooms with the counter surface mounted too high, violating the requirements in Section 4.19.2 and Figure 31 of the ADAAG and Section 606.3 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- vi. The Plaintiff could not transfer to the toilet without assistance, as objects are mounted less than 12" above a grab bar obstructing its use. Violation: The grab bars do not comply with the requirements prescribed in Sections 4.16.4 & 4.26 of the ADAAG and Section 609.3 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- vii. The Plaintiff could not transfer to the toilet without assistance, as objects on the floor obstructed the clear floor space. Violation: The required clear floor space is not provided next to the toilet, violating Section 4.16.2 & Figure 28 of the ADAAG, 28 CFR 36.211, and 604.3 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.
- viii. The Plaintiff could not flush the toilet without assistance, as the flush valve is not mounted on the wide area. Violation: The flush valve is not mounted on the compliant side in violation of

Section 4.16.5 of the ADAAG and Section 604.6 of the 2010 ADA Standards, whose resolution is readily achievable.

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27. The discriminatory violations described in this Complaint are not an exclusive list of the Defendants' ADA violations. Plaintiff requests an inspection of the Defendants' place of public accommodation in order to photograph and measure all of the discriminatory acts violating the ADA and barriers to access in conjunction with Rule 34 and timely notice. Plaintiff further requests to inspect any and all barriers to access that were concealed by virtue of the barriers' presence, which prevented Plaintiff, DENISE PAYNE, from further ingress, use, and equal enjoyment of the Commercial Property and the business therein; Plaintiff requests to be physically present at such inspection in conjunction with Rule 34 and timely notice. Plaintiff requests the inspection in order to participate in crafting a remediation plan to address Plaintiff's request for injunctive relief.

28. The individual Plaintiff, and all other individuals similarly situated, have been denied access to, and have been denied full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities privileges, benefits, programs and activities offered by Defendants, Defendants' buildings, businesses and facilities; and has otherwise been discriminated against and damaged by the Defendants because of the Defendants' ADA violations as set forth above. The individual Plaintiff, and all others similarly situated, will continue to suffer such discrimination, injury and damage without the immediate relief provided by the ADA as requested herein. In order to remedy this discriminatory situation, The Plaintiff requires an inspection of the Defendants' place of public accommodation in order to determine all of the areas of non-compliance with the

Americans with Disabilities Act.

29. Defendants have discriminated against the individual Plaintiff by denying her access to full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations of its place of public accommodation or commercial facility, in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 12181 et seq. and 28 CFR 36.302 et seq. Furthermore, Defendants continue to discriminate against Plaintiff, and all those similarly situated, by failing to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices or procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford all offered goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations to individuals with disabilities; and by failing to take such efforts that may be necessary to ensure that no individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services.

30. Plaintiff is without adequate remedy at law, will suffer irreparable harm, and has a clear legal right to the relief sought. Further, injunctive relief will serve the public interest and all those similarly situated to Plaintiff. Plaintiff has retained the undersigned counsel and is entitled to recover attorneys' fees, costs and litigation expenses from Defendants pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12205 and 28 CFR 36.505.

31. While Defendant, WATERWAY SHOPPES II, LLLP, as landlord and owner of the Commercial Property, is primarily responsible for all ADA violations listed in this Complaint, tenants and landlords can be held jointly and severally liable for ADA violations.

32. A Defendant is required to remove the existing architectural barriers to the physically disabled when such removal is readily achievable for their place of public accommodation, The Plaintiff and all others similarly situated, will continue to suffer such

discrimination, injury and damage without the immediate relief provided by the ADA as requested herein. In order to remedy this discriminatory situation, The Plaintiff requires an inspection of the Defendants' place of public accommodation in order to determine all of the areas of non-compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

33. Notice to Defendants is not required as a result of the Defendants' failure to cure the violations by January 26, 1992 (or January 26, 1993, if a Defendants has 10 or fewer employees and gross receipts of \$500,000 or less). All other conditions precedent have been met by Plaintiff or waived by the Defendants.

34. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12188, this Court is provided with authority to grant Plaintiff Injunctive Relief, including an order to alter the property where Defendants operate their businesses, located at and/or within the commercial property located at 2310-2410 Weston Road, Weston, FL 33326, the exterior areas, and the common exterior areas of the Commercial Property and businesses located within the Commercial Property, to make those facilities readily accessible and useable to The Plaintiff and all other mobility-impaired persons; or by closing the facility until such time as the Defendants cure the violations of the ADA.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff, DENISE PAYNE, respectfully requests that this Honorable Court issue (i) a Declaratory Judgment determining Defendants at the commencement of the subject lawsuit were and are in violation of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12181 et seq.; (ii) Injunctive relief against Defendants including an order to make all readily achievable alterations to the facilities; or to make such facilities readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities to the extent required by the ADA; and to require Defendants to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices or procedures, when such modifications

are necessary to afford all offered goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations to individuals with disabilities; and by failing to take such steps that may be necessary to ensure that no individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services; (iii) An award of attorneys' fees, costs and litigation expenses pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12205; and (iv) such other relief as the Court deems just and proper, and/or is allowable under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Dated: June 3, 2022

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